

Newton PATH Initiative

Prevention, Awareness, Treatment, Hope

July 2019 update

Mayor Ruthanne Fuller and the City of Newton have an established multi-disciplinary working group committed to confronting the opioid crisis and substance use disorder. Newton PATH, is made up members of Health and Human Services, Police, Fire, Drug Court, Newton Wellesley Hospital, Newton Public Schools, the City Council, and community partners who work in the recovery community. Newton PATH is taking a multi-pronged approach to tackling this complex issue, organized into the PATH acronym Prevention, Awareness, Treatment, and Hope.

The working group, formally launched in late 2015, has made some significant efforts to date and has more underway:

Prevention

- ✓ Adult/Teen Roundtable discussion program on risks and realities of alcohol and substance use held at Newton South High School spring 2017
- ✓ Local pharmacies now distributing PATH developed information card promoting opioid awareness and safe RX disposal
- ✓ Permanent drug take-back kiosks in the police station (January 2016) and Newton Wellesley Hospital (summer 2017) to promote safe RX disposal
- ✓ Building trust between community and law enforcement via events including Badges, Ball and BBQ event held fall 2016 and 2017 and more planned for 2018
- ✓ Prevention programming held at each Newton public high schools in 2017, 2018 and 2019
- ✓ Held drug take-back day combined with shredding day to encourage more people to get rid of unused medications in November 2018. Yielded 5 boxes (165 lbs.) of returned medication.
- ✓ Held spring 2019 drug takeback day on April 27th. Yielded 6 boxes (190 lbs.) of returned medication.
- ✓ Student Program on addiction and mental health featuring Chris and Kathi Sullivan held on April 26, 2019, Newton South.
- ✓ Improbable Players community performance of “End of the Line” held on May 14th, 2019, at Newton North.

- ✓ Materials made on marijuana education meant for adults, teens and expecting mothers, distributed at some doctor's offices in Newton.

Awareness

- ✓ Community Event with educational film *If Only*, panel, community discussion and resource tables held fall 2017 – 200+ attendees
- ✓ Social media and traditional media awareness building via articles in Newton TAB, Facebook, twitter, Instagram posts (coordinated among PATH partners), HHS newsletter, Veterans newsletter, direct mailing to nonprofit, faith based and business partners
- ✓ Developing better data tracking mechanisms between EMS, Fire, Police, NWH and MA DPH
- ✓ Resource and Awareness posters designed and posted in Newton schools and other youth spaces
- ✓ Applied for and received funding to expand Medical Reserve Corps for Community Connections Initiative designed to increase outreach and education in the community at public events and connecting with local nonprofits, faith based and neighborhood groups
- ✓ Designed and posted large awareness building banners to hang throughout the community in 2018 (Addiction Hurts Everyone) and 2019 (Need Narcan?)
- ✓ "Opioids and our Community," forum took place in October 2018, included a panel discussion and workshops for adults and teens
- ✓ Marijuana forum "Wondering about Weed?" held on November 28th, 2018 on the myths and realities of use for adults and teens

Treatment

- ✓ Developed and implemented new Naloxone training and distribution pilot program delivered by HHS staff to interested residents, businesses and city officials during summer 2018 - present
- ✓ Police, Fire, Ambulance and school nurses all equipped with Naloxone, an overdose reversal drug
- ✓ Law enforcement implementation of standard protocol to follow for all substance use related calls by jail diversion social worker
- ✓ Ambulance, Fire trucks, and Newton Wellesley Hospital all equipped with substance use treatment resource and referral treatment packages of information (Newton specific, developed by PATH) to distribute as appropriate during relevant first responder calls and ED visits

- ✓ The City of Newton made a community benefits request of Newton Wellesley Hospital to provide more crisis intervention in the emergency department, increase availability of on-site treatment options, develop recovery coach capacity, and coordinate with Newton's HHS department to promote referrals to treatment. NWH has made significant strides in this area including:
 - Operating a substance use services clinic on site
 - Designating a physician, Dr. Antje Barreveld, to lead the effort
 - Working closely with Mayor, HHS Commissioner on program design
 - Two NWH clinic members designated as active Newton PATH members
 - Hired new physician with extensive background in substance use disorder treatment to start seeing patients as well as physician assistant and social worker. Currently interviewing for recovery coach position.
 - Expanded number of physicians able to provide medically assisted treatment
 - Designated spring 2017 fundraiser exclusively for addiction services and raised \$875,000
 - Mayor Warren, Newton police chief and Newton health commissioner all presented to hospital Board of Overseers in preparation for the fundraiser
 - Currently reviewing with legal team strategies for collaborating with health and human services department to provide resource and referral follow up when assistance is needed
- ✓ Drop in Resource Nights for people seeking treatment and recovery services held December 2017, partnering with neighboring communities for monthly drop-in resource nights
- ✓ Worked with Newton Drug Court to bring new treatment provider, Gavin Foundation, to Newton
- ✓ Training for pharmacists to help them identify the warning signs of prescription misuse and the tools for intervening held January, 2018
- ✓ Implementing screening tool (SBIRT) for early intervention for all NPS students in grades 8 and 10 during 2017/18 school year
- ✓ Actively participating in regional coalition to provide consistent response to overdoses using multi-community network of law enforcement, health departments, recovery providers, and hospitals (working with Waltham, Watertown, Weston, Lexington and Belmont currently)
- ✓ Developed resources for employees of the City of Newton with treatment information, and information on the City's Employee Assistance Program
- ✓ Hired a new assistant director of social services in Nov. 2018 who supports substance use efforts
- ✓ Participant in Charles River Opioid Taskforce meetings with the Middlesex County District Attorney to focus on different regional efforts of combating the opioid crisis.

Hope

- ✓ Resource and referral materials developed and disseminated by first responders to loved ones at substance related first responder calls and at NWH emergency department
- ✓ “Gather for Hope” event for loved ones held November, 2017 with speakers, recovery and support organizations at info tables, Narcan training, and community building. 50+ attendees.
- ✓ Facilitated a resident advisory group to help design community programs 2017 - 2018
- ✓ Worked with NWH to organize a support group for families who have loved ones struggling with addiction during the summer 2018
- ✓ Individual case management offered to family members of someone with substance use disorder